

## **Less Tears When It Comes to Homework**

Teachers assign homework so that it can help children practice skills learned at school and to develop good study habits. Use homework as an opportunity to show your children that you value education and learning. Your child's homework will give you a chance to learn about what your child is learning in school.

Schedule a time everyday to sit and do homework. On nights when there is no homework, require your child to still engage in some learning activities such as reading or writing for a specified time. You are establishing the habit of spending quiet time learning at home every night. If possible, use the time yourself to read a book, read the mail, write a letter or email, use math to balance your checkbook, or do a task that can show your child you are learning too. For those with children in the elementary grades, starting this routine early allows it to be part of your family life when your children become older.

Pick a spot where homework is done every night and remove as many distractions as possible. Have supplies ready nearby so time is not wasted looking for pencils, crayons, markers, or anything else that is needed. Keep a shoebox that has needed items and is used only for homework.

When your child has a project where they have a couple of days to complete it, help your child set up a plan to get it done. Do a little bit each day. Explain to your child how you make a plan when you have a project at home or at work.

Look over the homework. Read the directions and look over any of the problems. Ask your child questions about the homework. Ask them what was hard or easy about the homework. Explain to them how what they are learning will help them later. If possible, go to the library and find books about the topics they have been learning about.

Praise your child's efforts. You don't want your child to associate homework with fights at home. When the homework comes back from school, look it over and comment on how your child did.

Should I help with the homework? Help when it seems you should, like testing your child on spelling words or working on a math problem together after your child has tried it. If your child should be able to do it on their own, let them. Your child's teacher would rather see what your child can do on their own. Doing your child's homework for them gives children the message you think they can't do it, or that you don't value homework.

If you're concerned about your child spending too much or too little time on homework, ask your child's teacher. If your child is frustrated, doesn't understand the directions, or has any other difficulties, talk to your child's teacher and come up with a plan. At the beginning of the year, ask your child's teacher what the policy is for homework.

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The Malden Public Schools, Parent Connection is sponsored by Malden's Title I Office. One of the goals of Title I is to support parental involvement in schools and to support parents in helping their children. Title I is a federally funded component of No Child Left Behind, designed to support schools with high numbers of low-income students.